

Message

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Sent: 2/8/2011 12:02:47 AM
To: Bill Dunbar/R10/USEPA/US@EPA; Phil North/R10/USEPA/US@EPA; Palmer Hough/DC/USEPA/US@EPA; hil North/R10/USEPA/US@EPA; Palmer Hough/DC/USEPA/US@EPA; almer Hough/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
Subject: Murkowski Welcomes EPA Study of Bristol Bay
Attachments: image.jpg; mailto:Robert_Dillon@energy.senate.gov; robert_dillon@energy.senate.gov; megan_hermann@energy.senate.gov; http://energy.senate.gov/public/; Robert_dillon@energy.senate.gov

From: Dillon, Robert (Energy) [mailto:Robert_Dillon@energy.senate.gov]
Sent: Monday, February 07, 2011 5:01 PM
Subject: GOP ENR: Murkowski Welcomes EPA Study of Bristol Bay

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FEBRUARY 7, 2011 MEGAN HERMANN (202) 224-7875

Murkowski Welcomes EPA Decision to Study Bristol Bay Watershed

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, today commended Environmental Protection Agency officials on their decision to assess the potential impacts of mining and other development projects on the Bristol Bay watershed.

“The EPA’s decision to withhold judgment on the potential environmental impact of projects, like the Pebble Mine, until all the scientific information has been collected and analyzed is a prudent decision,” Murkowski said.

Opponents of the Pebble Mine last year petitioned the EPA to preemptively block the development. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson called Murkowski today to tell her the agency was instead commissioning further study of the region.

Murkowski, the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, said the agency’s pronouncement is in keeping with President Obama’s pledge to base his administration’s decisions on the best available science.

“I am committed to letting the science decide whether mining is right for the Bristol Bay region, but any attempt to prejudge a project before the environmental work is finished would be a troubling signal, as well as a clear violation of the environmental review process,” Murkowski said.

Pebble, located in Southwest Alaska to the north of Lake Iliamna, is one of the largest prospects for copper, gold, molybdenum and silver in the world. The companies working on the mine proposal have invested more than \$100 million in research, studies and field work in preparation to begin applying for the necessary environmental permits in 2011 or 2012.

Bristol Bay is also home to the world’s biggest salmon fishery, and it is because of the fishery’s importance to the state’s economy and the traditional subsistence activities of local residents that Murkowski has reserved judgment on whether mining should occur until the environmental assessment is completed.

“I remain staunchly committed to protecting the health of the Bristol Bay watershed, but fishing and subsistence alone are not enough to ensure the survival of our communities,” Murkowski said. “I will not trade fish for minerals, but I believe that companies willing to invest in our region deserve to be given a fair shake to present their proposals.”

Murkowski told Jackson that she hopes this decision will start the process of improving communication between Alaska officials and the EPA on a host of issues, including Shell’s air permit for its Beaufort Sea exploration plan, Healy coal, ConocoPhillips’ CD-5 oil field

and marine air pollution issues.

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For further information, please contact Robert Dillon at 202.224.6977 or robert_dillon@energy.senate.gov or Megan Hermann at 202.224.7875 or megan_hermann@energy.senate.gov.

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